

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a computing device, a method comprising:  
receiving a message at a message-handling mechanism that is  
configured to present message data to users;

5 providing the message to a set of at least one rule client;  
and

receiving data from the rule client that instructs the  
message-handling mechanism to take an action with respect to the  
message.

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2. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message  
comprises receiving a message in an SMS format.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message  
15 comprises receiving a message formatted according to a protocol,  
the protocol belonging to a set containing IMAP4, POP3,  
ActiveSync, Instant Messaging and MMS.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the message  
20 comprises calling the rule client on a defined interface.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving data from the  
rule client comprises receiving data indicating that the message

is to be discontinued, and further comprising, deleting the message.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving data from the  
5 rule client comprises receiving data indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients, and further comprising, determining whether at least one other rule client is present, and if so, providing the message to another rule client.

10 7. The method of claim 6 wherein no other rule client is present, and further comprising, storing the message for display in a user interface corresponding to the message-handling mechanism.

15 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the data from the rule client indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients comprises information indicating that the rule client was not interested in handling the message.

20 9. The method of claim 6 wherein the data from the rule client indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients comprises information indicating that the rule client handled the message.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the message comprises, making a copy of the message, and providing the copy to the rule client.

5 11. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the message comprises setting a flag associated with the message at an inbox program, calling a message storing component, detecting the flag at the message storing component, and calling the rule client from the message storing component.

10 12. The method of claim 1 further comprising, receiving the message at a rule client and communicating information from that message to a program that is distinct from the message-handling mechanism.

15 13. The method of claim 1 further comprising returning the data from the rule client to the message-handling mechanism.

20 14. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions which when executed perform the method of claim 1.

15. In a computing device, a method comprising:

providing a rule client, the rule client coupled to receive messages from a message-handling mechanism that presents message data to users;

5 providing information corresponding to the message to a program that is distinct from the message-handling mechanism; and

returning a response to the message-handling mechanism, the response including data that instructs the message handling  
10 mechanism as to further processing of the message.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein returning the response comprises returning data indicating that the message is to be discontinued.

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17. The method of claim 15 wherein returning the response comprises returning data indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients or stored in a user interface.

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18. The method of claim 15 wherein returning the response comprises returning data indicating that the rule client was not interested in handling the message.

19. The method of claim 15 further comprising, modifying the message.

20. The method of claim 15 further comprising registering  
5 the rule client for receiving messages.

21. The method of claim 15 further comprising providing information from the rule client indicating that the rule client requests read-only access to messages.

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22. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions which when executed perform the method of claim 15.

23. In a computing device, a system comprising:

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a rule client;

a message-handling mechanism coupled to the rule client to pass received messages to the rule client and to interpret data returned from the rule client for each message regarding further processing of that message; and

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a program corresponding to a rule client and coupled for communication with the rule client, the rule client evaluating data in the messages received from the message-handling mechanism, and communicating data corresponding to at least one of the messages to the program based on the evaluation.

24. The system of claim 23 wherein the data returned from the rule client for one of the messages indicates that the message is to be discontinued.

5        25. The system of claim 23 wherein the data returned from the rule client for one of the messages indicates that the message may be provided to another rule client or stored in a user interface.

10       26. The system of claim 23 wherein the data returned from the rule client for one of the messages indicates that the rule client was not interested in handling the message.

27. In a computing device, a process comprising:

15       (a) receiving message data at a message-handling mechanism that is configured to present message data via a user interface;

      (b) selecting a first rule client of a set of rule clients as a selected rule client;

      (c) providing the message to the selected rule client and  
20       receiving a response from the selected rule client;

      (d) determining from the response whether the selected rule client has indicated that the message should be discontinued, and if so,

          (1) deleting the message and ending the process;

and if not,

(2) determining whether there is at least one other  
rule client to which the message has not been provided,

and if so,

5           (i) selecting another rule client as the selected  
rule client and returning to (c),

and if not,

(ii) presenting the message data via the user  
interface and ending the process.

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28. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable  
instructions which when executed perform the method of claim 25.